

REMARKS

Claims 18-20 and 28-45 are currently pending. Claims 37-45 are new and claims 1-17 and 21-27 have been cancelled. Applicant reserves the right to pursue original and other claims in this and in other applications.

Claims 18-19, 22, 23-25, 27-29, 31, 32-34, and 36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Cato et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,539,394) (“Cato”). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 18 recites, *inter alia*, an article management system, comprising:

a noncontact electronic tag storing tag data attached to an article managed in a management area;

a passage radio communication means that can communicate with the noncontact electronic tag installed in a passage section leading to the management area, wherein the passage radio communication means is configured to communicate with the noncontact electronic tag attached to the article passing through the passage section;

a tag check processing means for determining whether the noncontact electronic tag is permitted to pass through the passage section or is inhibited from passage, where said check processing means further comprises:

a multiple tag access processing means for avoiding a collision between said noncontact electronic tag and a second noncontact electronic tag and for receiving tag data stored in said noncontact electronic tag for processing executed by the passage radio communication means,

where said multiple tag access processing is enabled when said tag check processing means detects a noncontact electronic tag whose passage is inhibited.

Cato discloses a method for reading identification tags which includes a method for resolving collisions, e.g., reading tags that transmit information at a same time slot. Cato discloses

resolving collisions by providing a hashing algorithm which will determine the next time slot in which a tag will transmit information.

Cato fails to disclose “a tag check processing means for determining whether the noncontact electronic tag is permitted to pass through the passage section or is inhibited from passage.” Cato’s tags do not contain information regarding the status of the item coupled to the tag. Cato’s tags simply stop transmitting information when an acknowledgement signal is received by the tag indicating that the tag’s information has been successfully read by a tag reader. (See for example, Cato, Col. 6, lines 16-22) Cato does not describe the tags of claimed invention which contain passage information regarding a designation indicating whether an item to which the tag is attached is permitted or inhibited to pass through an area. (see, for example, specification paras. [0144]-[0145]).

As Cato fails to disclose tags that indicate whether passage of an item through an area is permitted, Cato also fails to disclose “where said multiple tag access processing is enabled when said tag check processing means detects a noncontact electronic tag whose passage is inhibited.” Thus Cato does not anticipate the claimed invention.

For at least those reasons, the rejection of claim 18 should be withdrawn and claim 18 and its dependant claims allowed over Cato.

Claim 28 recites, *inter alia*, a storage medium storing a program for operating an article management processing system, said processing system when executing said program performing the steps of:

communicating using a passage radio communication system with a noncontact electronic tag storing tag data attached to an article managed in a management area, said passage radio communication system being installed in a passage section leading to the management area, wherein said passage radio communication means is configured to communicate with the noncontact electronic tag attached to the article passing through the passage section;

detecting using a check processing program whether the noncontact electronic tag is permitted to pass through the passage section, where said check processing program further comprises:

a multiple tag access processing program for avoiding a collision between said noncontact electronic tag and a second noncontact electronic tag and for reading the tag data stored in said noncontact electronic tag for processing executed by the passage radio communication means,

where said multiple tag access processing is enabled when said tag check processing means detects a noncontact electronic tag whose passage is inhibited.

As noted above, Cato fails to disclose whether a noncontact electronic tag is permitted to pass through the passage section or is inhibited from passage. Cato's tags do not contain information regarding the status of the item coupled to the tag. (See for example, Cato, Col. 6, lines 16-22) Cato does not anticipate the claimed invention, where the tags of claimed invention maintain passage information regarding its designation and whether an item to which the tag is affixed is permitted or inhibited to pass through an area.

As Cato fails to disclose tags that indicate whether the item is permitted or inhibited to pass through an area, Cato also fails to disclose "where said multiple tag access processing is enabled when said tag check processing means detects a noncontact electronic tag whose passage is inhibited." Thus, the rejection of claim 28 should respectfully be withdrawn and claim 28 and its dependant claims allowed over Cato.

Claim 32 recites, *inter alia*, a storage medium storing a program for operating an article management processing system, said processing system when executing said program performing the steps of:

communicating using a radio communication system with a noncontact electronic tag attached to an article managed in a management area, wherein said noncontact electronic tag includes tag data;

processing using a multiple tag access program of said radio communication system, said processing comprising:

processing using a interrogation communication processing system configured to set a part of a unique ID stored in the noncontact electronic tag as a reference for determining a response timing for causing the noncontact electronic tag to transmit a response data, and transmitting specification data specifying the part of the ID;

processing using a response data acquiring processing system configured to acquire the response data of the noncontact electronic tag which did not have collision during the response by the response timing;

processing using a response stop processing system configured to transmit a signal for stopping a further response from a noncontact electronic tag which receives a response data; and

processing using a repetitive processing system which is enabled when a plurality of noncontact electronic tags make a response at the same response timing and one of a response data received by said radio communication means collides with another of a response data, said repetitive processing system configured to change a specification position in the specification data and causing the interrogating communication processing means, the response data acquiring processing means and the response stop processing means to be re-executed.

Cato fails to disclose a “multiple tag access program” which includes a “processing using a repetitive processing system...configured to change a specification position in the specification data” and “causing the interrogating communication processing means, the response data acquiring processing means and the response stop processing means to be re-executed.” Cato does not address changing any position in a specification data. As noted above, Cato performs multiple tag access processing by altering the timing of re-transmission of tag information. For at least that reason, the claimed invention is not anticipated by Cato. Thus, the rejection of claim 32 should respectfully be withdrawn and claim 32 and its dependant claims allowed over Cato.

Claims 20-21, 26, 30, and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cato in view of Muhme (U.S. Pat. No. 5,886,634) ("Muhme"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claims 20; 30; and 35 depend from claim 18; 28; and 32, respectively, and are allowable over Cato for at least the reasons note above.

Muhme discloses a security system that determines whether an item associated with a tag is permitted to be removed from an area.

With respect to claims 20 Muhme fails to cure the deficiencies of Cato and fails to disclose "a tag check processing means for determining whether the noncontact electronic tag is permitted to pass through the passage section or is inhibited from passage." Muhme tags do not contain information regarding the status of the item coupled to the tag, Muhme looks to a database to determine the status of that item associated with the tag. As such, Muhme does not anticipate the claimed invention, where the tags of claimed invention maintain passage information regarding its designation of whether the item is permitted or inhibited to pass through an area. As Muhme fails to disclose tags that indicate whether the item is permitted or inhibited to pass through an area, Muhme also fails to disclose "where said multiple tag access processing is enabled when said tag check processing means detects a noncontact electronic tag whose passage is inhibited."

Even if Cato and Muhme could be combined, which Applicant disputes, the combined teachings of Cato and Muhme would not achieve the claimed invention since the combined teachings would still fail obtain a system having "a tag check processing means for determining whether the noncontact electronic tag is permitted to pass through the passage section or is inhibited from passage". For at least those reasons, the rejection of claims 20-21 should be withdrawn and the claims allowed over Cato and Muhme.

With respect to claim 30, Muhme fails to cure the deficiencies of Cato and fails to disclose information on a noncontact electronic tag that indicates that the item is permitted to pass through the passage section or is inhibited from passage. Muhme's tags do not contain information

regarding the status of the item coupled to the tag. (See for example, Cato, Col. 6, lines 16-22) The tags of Muhme are different from the claimed invention, where the tags of claimed invention maintain passage information regarding its designation of whether the item is permitted or inhibited to pass through an area. As Muhme fails to disclose tags that indicate whether the item is permitted or inhibited to pass through an area, Muhme also fails to disclose “where said multiple tag access processing is enabled when said tag check processing means detects a noncontact electronic tag whose passage is inhibited.” Thus Muhme does not anticipate the claimed invention.

Even if Cato and Muhme could be combined, which the Applicant disputes, the combined teachings of Cato and Muhme would not achieve the claimed invention. Thus, the rejection of claim 30 should respectfully be withdrawn and claim 30 allowed over Cato and Muhme.

With respect to claim 35, Muhme fails to cure the deficiencies of Cato and fails to disclose a “multiple tag access program” which includes a “processing using a repetitive processing system...configured to change a specification position in the specification data and causing the interrogating communication processing means” Muhme does not address changing any position in a specification data. As noted above, Muhme does not disclose a method for processing collisions. For at least that reason, the claimed invention is not obvious over Muhme in combination with Cato. Even if Cato and Muhme could be combined, which the Applicant disputes, the combined teachings of Cato and Muhme would not achieve the claimed invention. Thus, the rejection of claim 35 should respectfully be withdrawn and claim 35 allowed over Cato and Muhme.

Claims 37-45 are new. No new matter has been included. Claims 37-45 have language similar to claims 18-20 and are allowable over Cato separately and in combination with Muhme for at least the reasons noted above with respect to claims 18-20.

In view of the above amendment, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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